



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
6 West Rose St. Ste. 400
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1870

POWER BUSINESS LINE

January 3, 2003

In reply refer to: PTS/Walla Walla

To: People Interested in the Maiden Wind Farm

Bonneville Power Administration and Benton County have completed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Maiden Wind Farm. If you requested a copy of the Draft EIS or Summary, a copy of the Final EIS is enclosed. The abbreviated Final EIS is made up of three parts:

- 1) a brief introduction and summary of the project and the EIS process;
- 2) changes and corrections to be made to the Draft EIS to make it final; and
- 3) comments received on the Draft EIS and responses to them.

Since the changes and corrections to the Draft EIS are relatively minor, we have chosen to just print the changes to the Draft. The Final EIS includes both the abbreviated Final document and a copy of the Draft EIS.

Proposal

Washington Winds Inc. has proposed development of the Maiden Wind Farm, a new wind energy project to be located near Sunnyside in Benton and Yakima Counties, Washington. Benton and Yakima Counties have received applications from Washington Winds for Conditional Use Permits. In April 2001, BPA entered into a pre-development agreement with Washington Winds Inc. that provided BPA the option to consider purchase of up to 50 average megawatts of the electrical output of the project and to prepare an EIS. The developer also requested interconnection onto BPA's transmission system. Purchase of power and interconnection of the project would be dependent on reaching a mutually acceptable agreement between BPA and the developer. Due to current power market conditions and BPA's financial situation, BPA is uncertain if and when such an agreement could be reached. Nonetheless BPA and Benton County are issuing the Final EIS for the project.

Background

The proposed facility would generate between 150 and 494 megawatts of power. (A megawatt is an electrical unit of power equal to 1,000 kilowatts.) Washington Winds is considering using turbines ranging from 900-kilowatt (kW) to 2,000-kW output each. Washington Winds has not yet picked a turbine design, or decided how large a project to build, so exact numbers of turbines are not known. Power from the project would most likely be interconnected to BPA's existing Midway-Big Eddy 230-kV transmission line that transects the western portion of the project site.

Environmental Process

In order to study the effects of the proposed project, BPA and Benton County completed a Draft EIS for the Maiden Wind Farm and made it available for review and comment in March 2002. In response to the comments we received, we have made some changes that are included in the abbreviated Final EIS.

If and when BPA makes a final decision on whether to purchase the output and provide transmission for the project, it will issue a Record of Decision (ROD) that identifies which alternative from the EIS has been adopted by BPA and discusses the other necessary ROD contents required under NEPA. Benton and Yakima Counties will consider the information in this EIS when deciding whether to grant conditional use permits and allow the proposed project to be developed.

For More Copies

If you need additional copies of the abbreviated Final EIS, or a copy of the Draft EIS, please call BPA's toll-free document request line: 1-800-622-4520. Leave a message naming this project and the document(s) you desire, and your complete mailing address. Both documents are also available on BPA's web site at: www.efw.bpa.gov – click on environmental planning/analysis, then on Active Projects. Copies are also available from the Benton County Planning and Building Department, 1002 Dudley Avenue, Prosser, Washington.

For More Information

If you need more information or have any questions, please call Tom Osborn at BPA, 509-527-6211, or e-mail trosborn@bpa.gov; or contact Mike Shuttleworth at Benton County at 509-786-5612, or email mike.shuttleworth@co.benton.wa.us. Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

/s/ Tom Osborn

Tom Osborn
Project Manager

/s/ Terry A. Marden

Terry A Marden
Benton County SEPA Administrator

Enclosure: Maiden Wind Farm Final Environmental Impact Statement (for those who requested a Draft EIS or Summary)